

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES IN UNITED STATES DEMOCRACY

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Introduction

In order to present the theme, Christian Influences in United States Democracy, with as much clarity as possible, I think the best approach is to present it in three sections. The first of these will touch on some aspects of political philosophy and the intellectual and religious formation of the Founding Fathers of the United States. In the second part I will examine the problem of "Americanism" as reflected in Pope Leo XIII's letter Testem Benevolentiae of January 22, 1899. This controversy occurred during one of the most interesting periods of the history of the Catholic Church in America and, as we shall see, it even had an impact on European Catholicism. And finally I shall go into the question of the Church and State in the United States. This is the problem of Catholics in a pluralistic society and we shall see how the Catholic conscience reacted in this unique situation and how it came about that American democracy is compatible with Catholicism.

I. Concepts of Christianity and the Founding Fathers

Our first section will review the concepts of Christianity in the lives of the Founding Fathers and how these concepts were projected into the philosophy of government.

In dealing with this subject we must realize that the Founding Fathers comprised a group of young and influential men who, like that philosopher-statesman of Greece, sought perfection through unity. Their spiritual beliefs were intimately connected with political action. For them there were no barriers separating science, philosophy, religion or art.

At this point it would probably be just as well to answer the question--Who were the American Founding Fathers? In a liberal sense this would, of course, include anyone who played a part in the establishment of the colonies and in molding the American concepts of freedom and independence. Nevertheless, there has been a tendency to use the term "Founding Fathers" more selectively. The term is generally applied to a few key men and in this first section we shall deal with their attitudes as Christians and with their ideas concerning Church and State.

These men are George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and James Jay.

However, any attempt to view the Founding Fathers against the backdrop of the times must take into account that their backgrounds were varied. The religions of the colonies were like the people who lived in them, having neither common origin nor a dominant character.

Although not all of these Founding Fathers acknowledged a formal faith it must be kept in mind that they did view mankind from a deeply religious standpoint. For them rights were "God-given," man was "endowed by his Creator," there were "natural laws" and "natural rights," while freedom was related to the "sacredness" of man. The development of a free man was not to be separated from the idea of moral man any more than religious man could be set apart from moral man.

Although most of them did not share the literal Biblical idea of Creation, they nevertheless respected the Bible as the source of Christian belief. They were, for instance, opposed to laws, which actually did exist in some of the states, making Church attendance compulsory.

It must be remembered that most of the Founding Fathers had been brought up in a strict religious atmosphere, many of them coming from Calvinist families. However, if they appeared to react against this, one must not lose sight of the fact that they did not react against the basic concepts regarding the spiritual nature of man. Most certainly they were God-fearing men and they staunchly respected the conditions which made possible the freedom of religious belief. It was this that caused them to put so much thought and energy into defending the cause of human rights.

Although there was necessarily a degree of diversity in their individual beliefs, there was a large measure of unity in their attitude towards religion in general. In fact, one of the elements which brought the Founding Fathers together concerned the relation of government to religion and the role of the individual in relation to both of these.

It is perhaps paradoxical that the constitutional freedoms of America were not exclusively the result of reaction against the tyrannies of England and Europe. It is unfortunately true that much of the persecution common to the Old World was transplanted to the New--particularly in the field of religion. Puritans made laws against the Quakers in Massachusetts. In

the State of Virginia, where the Church of England was accepted as the established religion, restrictions on Baptists, Quakers and Catholics were particularly severe. In most of the states there was a great deal of prejudice against Catholics. Because of this many Catholics fled to Maryland where under Lord Baltimore the freedom of religion had been established.

Catholics wrote the early laws and administered a state which for a time had one of the finest records for religious freedom of any of the colonies. However, later, when the Protestants came into a position of authority, the Catholics were to feel the weight of repressive legislation.

It was against this background that the Founding Fathers held the determined view that a man's religious beliefs were solely his own concern and his inviolable right.

The Founders were students of history and students of human nature. Although not tyrannical, they did realize the need for effective government in the interests of the commonweal. However, they held the view that the government should not play any role in determining the religion of the people.

The fact that they made no provisions for a state church must not be interpreted to mean that the Founders did not have a profound respect for religion. They were, however, quite well aware of the persecution and discrimination that had existed in the colonies wherever the state had sponsored a church and had arrogated the right to legislate against dissenters. It was therefore a matter of prudence to establish the concept of religious freedom for all and in this manner to avoid an almost inevitable struggle for power among the various denominations. This necessarily meant that the guarantees of religious freedom would have to apply equally well to believers and non-believers. The right of an individual to worship in the church of his choice, or not to worship at all, was considered an essential part of a free society.

Let us consider, for instance, the philosophy and the religious beliefs of some of the Founding Fathers. George Washington, first President of the United States, was an Episcopalian. As Commander-in-Chief he effectively dealt with religious prejudice and trumped-up fears of domination by Catholicism, for instance. Washington showed his concern over the attitude of the American expeditionary force in Canada towards Catholics by issuing an order calling for the commemoration of St. Patrick's Day. He was constantly vigilant in the cause of religious freedom and carefully avoided showing partiality.

His biographers agree that Washington was a devout believer

in orthodox Christianity. He wrote that he was "sure there never was a people who had more reason to acknowledge a divine interposition in their affairs than those of the United States, and I should be pained to believe that they have forgotten that Agency, which so often manifested itself during our Revolution." And in another place he wrote: "Ours is a kind of struggle designed by Providence, I dare say, to try our patience and the fortitude and virtue of men."

However, like most of the leaders of his period, Washington felt that the best interests of religion would be served by making sure that no single denomination be allowed to hold sway over another. In this sense he wrote: "We have abundant reason to rejoice that in this land the light of truth and reason has triumphed over the power of bigotry and superstition and that every person may here worship God according to the dictates of his own heart... It is our boast that a man's religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of the laws, not deprive him of the right of attaining and holding the highest offices that are known in the United States."

The Continental Congress made provisions for each regiment to have its chaplain and Washington directed his commanding officers to act in this sense. He indicated from his headquarters in New York that the blessing and protection of Heaven were at all times necessary, but especially so during times of public distress and danger. He also ordered that the troops be given the opportunity to attend church and that they therefore be excused from fatigue duty on Sunday. References to dependence on Divine Providence pervade his writings. Following the end of the Revolutionary War, Washington, in response to congratulatory messages, expressed sentiments of gratitude that "Divine Providence has graciously interposed for the protection of our Civil and Religious liberties." There are frequent references to "worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of our consciences," and he indicates that this was a right.

On another occasion he stated that religion and morality are the essential pillars of civil society and in his Farewell Address he said that national morality would not prevail under the exclusion of religious principle.

With regard to the freedom of conscience he stated: "If I would have entertained the slightest apprehension that the constitution formed in the Convention, where I had the honor to preside, might possibly endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical society, certainly I would never have placed my signature to it; and, if I could now conceive that the general government might ever be administered so as to render the liberty of conscience insecure, I beg you will be persuaded that no one

could be more zealous than myself to establish effectual barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny and every species of religious persecution."

Concerning the objectives of government, Washington wrote that "Government being, among other purposes, instituted to protect the persons and consciences of men from oppression, it certainly is the duty of rulers, not only to abstain from it themselves, but according to their stations, to prevent it in others.... The liberty enjoyed by people of these States, of worshipping Almighty God agreeably to their consciences, is not only among the choicest of their blessings, but also of their rights."

Now let us turn to Thomas Jefferson. His parents were pioneers of the Anglican faith, and in his young days his education was in the hands of religious tutors. For Jefferson, no cause represented a greater challenge than the cause of religious freedom in Virginia. He believed that a state which identified itself with one denomination would make it difficult for others to exist. Religion, to Jefferson, had to be protected not so much against the irreligious as against government itself, acting in the name of religion.

Jefferson was proud of his Bill for Religious Freedom in Virginia and it provided that no man should be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry and that there should be no restraint upon his beliefs. He affirmed that all men should be free to profess and maintain their opinions in matters of religion without affecting their civil capacities.

This Act for Establishing Religious Freedom had a profound effect on all the American states. And it was also the philosophical basis of the Bill of Rights. It was concerned, not merely with the toleration of religion, but with workable guarantees that would make it possible for the individual to worship as he pleased.

And from his death bed Jefferson wrote to a friend: "Adore God. Love your neighbor as yourself. Be Just. Be true. Murmur not as to the ways of Providence. So shall the life into which you have entered be the portal to one of eternal and ineffable bliss."

We now come to James Madison, the fourth President of the United States, whom historians consider the Father of the Constitution. He was also one of the authors of the so-called Federalist papers which were destined to educate the American people on the issues and principles involved in transforming a group of

sovereign states into a balanced federation.

Like some of his colleagues, Madison studied for the ministry at Princeton University. Upon returning to Virginia he continued his theological interests and was very concerned over the situation there regarding freedom of worship.

Madison rarely referred to his religious beliefs, but his famous Memorial and Remonstrance was widely circulated and had a tremendous influence in arguing that "on the basis of the Bill of Rights" religion did not come within the "cognizance of government, either for the support of worship or inquiry into individual faith."

Another Founding Father who made a notable contribution during the formative period of American history was Alexander Hamilton. He was a co-author of the Federalist Papers which were considered to be the most incisive examination of the nature and function of popular government that has ever been written. His principal philosophical influence in his early years was like that of Jefferson and Adams. He argued vigorously on behalf of the natural rights of man which he considered to be part of man's relationship to God. He wrote: "The Supreme Being gave existence to man, together with the means of preserving and beautifying his existence. He endowed him with rational faculties by the help of which to discern and pursue such things as were consistent and invested him with an inviolate right to personal liberty and safety."

Before his fatal duel with Aaron Burr, in anticipation of his possible death, Hamilton wrote to his wife: "The consolations of religion, my beloved, can alone support you and these you have a right to enjoy. Fly to the bosom of your God and be comforted."

The last of the Founding Fathers we shall consider is Benjamin Franklin who was, as you know, a great friend and admirer of the French people. He has been described as a human prism because of his glittering light, no matter from what side he was viewed..... philosopher, statesman, printer, inventor or mathematician.

With regards to religion he asked only that he be allowed to pay his respects to all. This was his way of saying he did not want any denomination to be given authority over the others. His early education was that of a Presbyterian, although the early family background was Calvinist.

At the age of 22 he wrote his Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion in which he expressed belief in the existence of a

Supreme Being. Knowledge by itself would be meaningless, according to Franklin, unless it was in conjunction with a proper attitude toward people, to life in general and to a sense of responsibility.

During the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention, Franklin requested that prayers "imploping the assistance of Heaven and its blessings on our deliberations" be held in the Assembly every morning before each session.

A few weeks before his death, Franklin wrote: "Here is my creed. I believe in one God, Creator of the Universe. That He governs by this Providence. That He ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service to render Him is to do good to His other children. That the soul of man is immortal and will be treated with justice in another life. As to Jesus of Nazareth, I think that the system of morals and His religion as He left them to us, the best the world has ever seen or is likely to see."

From all of this we see plainly that the Founding Fathers were certainly not men devoid of religious convictions. Puritans, Cavaliers, Calvinists or Roman Catholics--all of them made their contributions to Americanism. From the Congregationalists came an influence toward democratic social organization, from the Quakers the sanctity of conscience, from the Presbyterians the development of the procedures of freedom by emphasis on law and order, from the Methodists the doctrine of the free individual, from the Catholics the natural law and from the Baptists freedom of conscience and separation of Church and State.

When England began stripping the colonies of their right of self-government, the thinkers among the colonists sought in treatises on civil government to find a philosophical basis for their traditional faith. John Locke's "Two Treatises on Government" and Algernon Sidney's "Discourse on Government" were the two most widely read works prior to the American revolution. Some people have thought to see in Montesquieu, Burlamaque or Puffendorf the source and spirit of American democracy. There is no doubt that contributions were made by Montesquieu's "The Spirit of the Laws" and by Burlamaque's "The Rights of Nature and Nation." However, in none of them can be found the particular and concrete form of government which the Americans sought to perpetuate. Nevertheless, the influence asserted by Burlamaque and Puffendorf, those disciples of Grotius, seems to have been greater than that of Montesquieu through their insistence that the Natural Law was the basis of the rights of individuals and nations as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. In any event, the constitutional structure of the American Republic was defined and its institutions established within the context of the liberal tradition of politics under the influence of Greek, Roman, Germanic

and Christian ideas about society, law and government. This tradition reached the American shores virtually intact. It had indeed been secularized somewhat, but it had not yet been demoralized--the distinction is used by Lord Percy in his book "The Heresy of Democracy." Protestantism had touched it and left upon it the taint of excessive individualism and voluntarism. The Enlightenment, too, had laid its secularizing hand upon it. But the influence of the Protestant faith in God and in Christ had at least blunted the impact of the Enlightenment and preserved the tradition from the radical secularization that it underwent in Continental Europe.

Authorities affirm that the political and legal climate of America during the Revolutionary, Constitutional and Federalist periods was substantially a Christian climate within which the common law and heritage of constitutionalism and the concept of natural rights had been formed.

And that brings me to the end of our first section. We will now examine the problem of Americanism as reflected in the Testem Benevolentiae of Pope Leo XIII.

**II. Problem of Americanism as Reflected
in the Testum Benevolentiae of Pope Leo XIII**

Only once in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States was the orthodoxy of doctrine called into question. The episode arose from a series of differences within the American hierarchy concerning such problems as secret societies, the teachings of Henry George and Catholic participation in the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893.

Meanwhile, the flourishing state of American Catholicism had attracted the attention of European observers, especially in France where the Church was being harassed by the policies of anti-clerical governments. As a consequence, some French Catholic leaders advocated a closer imitation of the Church in the United States. However, this was a line of policy which aroused violent dissent among the more conservative leaders of the French Church.

The controversy became so heated on both sides of the Atlantic over American teaching and methods that Pope Leo XIII finally took a hand in the matter and issued his letter on January 22, 1899. It was addressed to Cardinal Gibbons and the American hierarchy and was entitled Testum Benevolentiae. Under the name of "Americanism" he condemned three methods of apologetics which stressed natural virtues to the neglect of the supernatural ones--those notions of spiritual direction which insisted on individual inspiration and active virtues in preference to external guidance and passive virtues.

Certain American prelates, sometimes called progressive bishops, had endeavored to prevent publication of the Pope's letter. When it did appear, they denied that properly instructed Americans held the condemned doctrines. Opponents in Europe and America challenged these denials. However, the controversy was brought to an end through the necessity of having to accept the Pope's letter.

However, this did not prevent a certain sharpness of feeling between the progressive prelates and their opponents. Because of the silence and the inconclusive termination of the discussion, it has been difficult for students of history to distinguish fact from fiction in the Americanist controversy during the period 1895 to 1900.

In investigating these events, one becomes aware that the terms of the controversy obviously need some definition. In the first place, it is difficult to see exactly when the word "Ameri-

canism" acquired a religious meaning apart from its normal political and social implications. The ordinary American usage of the word indicating a citizen's devotion to American political institutions and ideals was expressly excluded by the Pope in his letter.

Another type of "Americanism," concerned with the doctrine against which the Pope's letter was directed, had acquired this name mainly in the writings of a small group of European liberal Catholics who fostered the ideas concerning a third kind of Americanism which might be called the incidentals. These consisted of certain tendencies and some isolated events which those European liberals took out of their context and rationalized into theological principles of the condemned Americanism.

The third kind of Americanism--although it has never been clearly defined--may be classified as the effects of the New World conditions on the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Faith. Its existence as well as its indefiniteness must be recognized if one is to understand the apparently contradictory statements about Americanism made at the time of the papal letter. In fact, the bitterness over the controversy of Americanism really arose from efforts by certain writers and ecclesiastics to make the first and third types of Americanism, as well as the second, come under the condemnation of the Pope's letter.

Thus some Americans tried to make the third type come under the papal condemnation. Only a few Europeans tried to make the papal document condemn American political ideals and they were quickly reprimanded by the Pope.

In this controversy it is important to distinguish between the European and the American phases which came together, at least in part, in Rome in the final stages of the discussion.

The American phase had its origin in efforts by progressive Americans to Americanize the Church organization in the United States. The European phase was essentially an attempt by Europeans to Americanize European Catholicism, and particularly by fostering greater cooperation with republican institutions.

The first was not a theological quarrel, except insofar as the progressive American ecclesiastics were accused of holding the theories of the European Americanizers in the later stages of the controversy. The second and more theological controversy was waged in French, German and Italian periodicals between groups which had little actual knowledge of the Church in the United States.

One group claimed all the progress of the Church in the United States was due to certain doctrines which they dubbed Americanism and which they urged European Catholics to adopt. Their opponents

said these doctrines should be condemned as heretical.

At this point, let us briefly examine the two main arguments in conjunction with some of the other problems which causes such intense feeling.

In the American discussion, the progressive churchmen of the period were chiefly Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota; James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, Maryland; Monsignor Denis J. O'Connell, Rector of American College in Rome; Bishop John J. Keane, Rector of Catholic University of America; and Bishop John Lancaster Spalding of Peoria, Illinois.

These men did not have any particular program for the Catholic Church organization in the United States other than the decisions of the Plenary Council of Baltimore. There was no identity of views on the issues of the day. But their outspoken friendliness to American political and social institutions had earned for them the name of progressive clergymen in the American press.

One of the five manifestations of progressive attitudes grew out of the formation of the Knights of Labor, a labor organization as the name indicates. Because of the violence and secrecy associated with the Irish Land Leagues and certain labor organizations in Europe and the Molly Maguires--another labor organization--in the United States, several of the more conservative bishops adopted an unfriendly attitude toward the Knights of Labor, even after the secret oath was abolished.

In 1886, the opposition grew serious when Cardinal Taschereau of Quebec condemned the Knights as a secret society and sought from Rome a papal condemnation. Cardinal Gibbons, urged on by Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane, appealed to Cardinal Manning of England to assist him. When in Rome in 1887 to receive the red hat, Gibbons brought up the matter and with Manning's help he was able to prevent the condemnation of the Knights of Labor.

In passing, it must also be noted that Gibbons' intervention is supposed to have been a major factor in preventing the "dechristianization" of the American workers--especially the Catholics.

In the meantime, another controversy broke out in New York concerning the single tax doctrine of Henry George, an economic writer. Father Edward McGlynn, a New York City priest, disobeyed Archbishop Michael Corrigan by publicly supporting George. Corrigan sought from Rome a condemnation of George's teachings of the ground that they denied the right of private property. However, again with the aid of Cardinal Manning, Gibbons prevented publication of any Roman condemnation of Henry George.

Cardinal Gibbons regarded the evils in both situations--the Knights of Labor and the single tax doctrine--as temporary and feared the consequences of making the Church appear to be unfriendly to the laboring classes, many of whom were Catholic immigrants.

Another divisive situation concerned the question of the Catholic parochial school system and the erection of the Catholic University of America. The progressive group involved itself in a complex controversy in which it could claim credit for the foundation of the university, but had to defend itself against being unfriendly towards the parochial schools. Archbishop Ireland drew upon himself charges of being unfriendly to the parochial school as a result of his address to the National Educational Association in St. Paul in 1890. He said he regretted the necessity of a separate parochial school by reason of his arrangement for State support for some of his parish schools. However, Cardinal Gibbons intervened for a decree of tolerati potest although in the meantime the arrangement had been discontinued because of non-Catholic opposition. Opposition to Archbishop Ireland also stemmed from his opposition to foreign language schools and churches. Requests that national churches in the various dioceses be granted full parochial rights were rejected by the progressives, Ireland and Keane.

In 1890 and 1891, memorials of German immigrant societies, deploring the great loss of faith in the immigrant population, asked that provision be made for a foreign representation in the American hierarchy, thereby bringing about a more effective recognition of the foreign Catholic population in the country.

Again, prompt action by Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Ireland and their friends caused the rejection of the petition. However, the leaders of the foreign language Catholics in the United States did not immediately give up hope and their press became bitter in its opposition to Americanization.

But the climax in the controversy over Americanization came when, on the occasion of the Columbus Exposition in Chicago, a World Parliament of Religions was held in 1893. Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane participated. This was immediately followed by much criticism that the prelates had compromised the Catholic position by such fraternization. They, of course, denied this, but in 1895 Pope Leo XIII ruled that there should be no further participation in future inter-faith congresses.

However, the controversy in the United States, which was primarily over Americanization and not Americanism, crossed to Rome and became entangled in the European quarrel over Americanism

when progressive leaders tried to prevent the papal condemnation of European Americanism. The progressives were naturally sensitive to the publication of such papal action against their position and American Catholicism.

While the progressive prelates in America were fostering political and social Americanism among the newly arrived immigrants, liberal Catholic groups in France, Germany and Italy began to praise the progress of the Church in America.

These liberals were in general poorly informed about life among the Catholics in the United States. They based their opinions chiefly on reports of travelers and employed the growth of American Catholicism as arguments of what they wanted to see adopted in Europe. In France, of course, the main thing was greater cooperation with the republic while in other countries the so-called Americanists sought other changes in Church policy. Thus, at the height of the controversy, European Americanism had at least four different meanings.

In Italy, Americanism was concerned with separation of Church and State and the elimination of the temporal power of the Holy See. In Germany, Americanism was associated with the modernists who sought a radical transformation in doctrine, particularly regarding the Church's attitude toward the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. And in France, Americanism included two distinct groups--the one favoring greater cooperation with the republican government and the other tending toward heretical modernism.

The French Americanists were the most influential in Europe and in Rome they attracted the attention of Roman editors. The second and less numerous group of French Americanists had found in the unlearned theological conduct of some American clergymen, especially in the Parliament of Religions of 1893, a facade for their heretical modernism.

Other groups of French Americanists were those who mainly favored greater ecclesiastical cooperation with the republican government. They had found strength in Pope Leo's letter to the French bishops of February 16, 1892 entitled "Au Milieu des Sollicitudes," which supported their stand. The appearance of Archbishop Ireland among them in 1892 gave them encouragement and in fact some of them believed he came with a direct charge from Leo XIII.

Speaking in the hall of the Geographic Society in Paris in June 1892, Ireland advocated greater cooperation with the spirit of the age, and praised the growth of the Church in the United States and the harmony which existed between Church and State.

Abbe Felix Klein, a young professor of the Institut Catholique de Paris, published a collection of Ireland's speeches which were later re-published as a book entitled The Church and Modern Society.

But Americanism did not become a center of controversy until the appearance of the French version of the Life of Father Isaac Hecker. Early in 1897, Abbe Klein received from the Count de Chabrol a translation of the Life of Father Hecker, written by Father Walter Elliot of the Paulist Fathers of the United States, with an introduction by Archbishop Ireland. Klein adapted and touched up the translation and wrote an enthusiastic preface in which he praised Hecker as the type of "modern priest."

He stressed those passages of the book and certain quotations from Hecker's diary which he felt made Hecker a forerunner of the type of priest needed in the modern world. For instance, Klein praised Hecker for saying that because of the personal independence naturally resulting from modern material conditions, the individual must be his own spiritual guide. And he also praised him for insisting that the direct action of God upon individual souls could be expected in these changed conditions.

He also lauded Hecker for teaching that the Church had reached a new period in which the Saxon races were predominant over the Latins and that a new spirituality was developing in which not the passive virtues, but the active ones were to be cultivated, thus offering greater opportunity for the immediate guidance of the individual soul by the Holy Spirit.

Praise of Hecker and of his doctrine, as expounded by Klein, was wide-spread and frequently lumped together as Americanism.

However, the reaction came when conservative and anti-republican groups declared the democratic implications of the new doctrines distasteful and pointed to theological defects in the writings of Klein.

In America, the progressive prelates, particularly Ireland, Keane and Gibbons, who were admirers of Hecker, did not share the enthusiasm of European Americanists.

The bombshell that really touched off the controversy was a series of articles published in La Verite Francaise, attacking Father Hecker and the doctrine of Americanism. Some of the articles were printed in book form under the titles of Etudes sur l'Americanisme, and Le Pere Hecker: Est-il un Saint?

Thus, in their new apologetical approach, the Americanists were accused of limiting the external submission to the Church, advocating a false liberation in their dealings with non-Catholics,

of advocating a complete separation of Church and State, of opposition to the evangelical virtues and the older religious orders and of advancing the practice of active virtues and natural virtues over the supernatural.

Informed of the imminent condemnation, Archbishop Ireland hastened to Rome, but when he arrived it was too late to stop the dispatch of the letter Testem Benevolentiae, which had already been sent to other American bishops. Cardinal Rampola, Secretary of State, reported that Pope Leo XIII could not delay his decision because of the threatened division of the Church in France over the question.

The Pope did not actually say that the doctrine he condemned was held in America. He said the letter was destined to suppress certain contentions which were supported in that country. He was careful to say that the erring doctrines had been imputed to the American Catholics by a foreign source and that the issue had nothing to do with the legitimate patriotism of Americans. He also said he was not accusing the Catholics of the United States of holding these views. He was merely warning that if such doctrines were being taught, they were erroneous. Following publication of the Pope's letter, the bishops of the Provinces of Milwaukee and New York thanked Leo XIII for saving the Church in America from the threat of heresy.

The more common reaction in the United States, however, was that of Cardinal Gibbons in his reply to the Pope on March 17, 1899. He said: "This doctrine, which I deliberately call extravagant and absurd, this Americanism as it has been called, has nothing in common with the views, aspirations, doctrines and conduct of Americans."

With regard to Cardinal Gibbons' role in this imbroglio, it must be recognized that his reputation as an eminent churchman was based on his comprehension of the American scene, having lived through the Civil War and the Reconstruction Period. He led the Church when the Americanization of millions of immigrants was a problem of great importance. It was to his credit that he clearly perceived the danger for the Church in the United States during his lifetime had nothing to do with Old Catholicism or Modernism, however serious their threat in Europe.

He fully realized that the American Constitution afforded the Catholic Church sufficient protection and guarantees. He also understood that many thousands of honest Americans genuinely were convinced that Catholics were aliens in spirit. He stressed at all times those things which bind Americans together rather than those which point to their separate and particular interests.

When the French monarchists attempted to exploit the papal letter as a condemnation of the Republic, the Pope reiterated his earlier support of the democratic trends in France in a letter dated May 25, 1899.

From the viewpoint of some American historians, it appears that American Catholicism did have some distinctive characteristics which distinguished it from the political and social Americanism and from the theological opinions formulated in Europe. The Americanism or Americanization which European religious writers rationalized into their heretical opinions can be considered as the effects of new world conditions or, if one will, of the American frontier on Roman Catholicism.

Foreign language writers in the United States have pointed out the many defects of American social and political conditions and the public opposition to Catholics. The growth of divorce, the decline of denominational Church membership, the American Protective Association (an organization engaged in bigotry and prejudice) and government interference in Catholic Indian missions were all stock arguments used to prove the evils of hasty Americanization of the Church.

Large-scale immigration into the United States and insufficient churches and clergy were all factors which must be considered in terms of lack of guidance and the need for personal action.

It is also clear that while Hecker and his admirers, Ireland, Gibbons, Keane and O'Connell praised American conditions, the freedom they lauded was never a freedom from ecclesiastical authority and religious dogma. It is also significant that Old World Catholicism is learning that Hecker and his friends were accurate in picturing the brighter future for the Church in the United States. But in the 1890's, these peculiar tendencies of American Catholicism had the pioneer qualities of rugged energy, contempt for red tape and a definite lack of culture and refinement. Catholicism, as well as all the institutions, had come under the impact of American frontier conditions. Protestantism had undergone many changes in the new situation. Roman Catholicism, safeguarded by its authoritarian organization, was affected by its material circumstances.

It may be argued that Pope Leo and the Cardinals who formulated the condemnation of the doctrines of the Americanists did have in mind the growing liberal theological tendencies in Western Europe and that in condemning Americanism they were checking the tendency toward what was later called Modernism.

There are some final questions to be answered concerning the results of the controversy and its condemnation. In Europe,

it is evident that the Americanist movement was killed by the papal letter. Archbishop Ireland, storming across France with his usual gusto, no longer talked about the advantages of training the French clergy along the lines of the American model. And he no longer advocated further cooperation with the French Government. Sight was soon lost of the controversy as having no real bearing on the internal religious crisis of France, exacerbated by the Dreyfus affair and the breaking of the Concordat. Historians affirm that if the condemnation had any permanent effect it strengthened the general European Catholic notion of superiority to the peasant and low class emigre Catholicism of the United States. In contrast to the tradition created by Gibbons according to which the American hierarchy is the friend of the laboring man, the French hierarchy generally retained the tradition of conservatism for nearly another generation, particularly in social and political matters.

To look for any change in the religious life of the American people as a result of Testem Benevolentiae is useless, because at no time did the American Catholic body have any definite notion of American Catholicism.

The quality which Ireland, Gibbons and the French democrats had admired in the American Catholic body was a spirit of freedom that arose from the freedom of America and had little to do with religious concepts. Freedom for the immigrants to live their faith to the fullest caused American Catholicism to become something distinct. Even as before Testem Benevolentiae they accepted authority in dogma and moral matters and continued to associate with non-Catholic neighbors in all things not necessarily religious--labor unions, business associations or sports. However, there was a greater concentration in the field of practical Catholicism. This is the true badge of American Catholicism generally.

Historians point out that it was unfortunate that there was not closer contact between European and American Catholics. Despite agreement on essentials, it has been said that only after a lapse of some 50 years have European Catholics begun urging the social and practical reforms which the Americans find easy. By the same token, American Catholicism is growing in theological awareness, in liturgical splendor and in appreciation of the high culture of the older Catholic communities of Western Europe.

And that brings me now to the third and last section of this lecture entitled Church and State in the United States -- Unity and Pluralism.

III. Church and State in the United States--Unity and Pluralism

There can be no understanding of the problem of Church and State in the United States without a review of the problem of pluralism. It existed at the time of the foundation of American democracy and it still exists today.

The problem of pluralism has a dual origin. In the first place it arises from the co-existence within a political community of groups holding different views concerning the nature and destiny of man. Such questions are basically religious. Pluralism therefore implies a plurality of incompatible religious faiths and it also implies disagreement within the community. On the other hand, plurality can imply agreement, unity and a certain consensus. The various groups form one community. They agree to live together in peace and they all cooperate toward the achievement of the temporal goals of the community. This cooperation toward the common goal implies a certain consensus. In particular, the various groups give common consent to the political and legal provisos in which the pluralism of the community finds expression in the structure of the State. Pluralism therefore means harmony amid discord. It means harmony of social life and political action amid the discord of religious creeds and modes of worship.

If society is to be a rational process, some set of principles must motivate the general participation of all religious groups in the social consensus and their common allegiance to the laws which reflect the pluralism of the society. At the same time, these principles must not hinder the maintenance by each group of its own distinct entity.

From the theoretical viewpoint, therefore, the problem of pluralism is twofold. In the first place, on what theory is the plurality within the community accepted in a manner not to destroy the necessary social unity? Secondly, on what theory is the consensus of the community based, in order that it does not infringe on the plurality, but permits to all the different groups the full integrity of their convictions?

In America, the problem of pluralism arose as unique in the modern world, chiefly because pluralism was the native condition of American society. It was not, as in Europe and in England, the result of a disruption or decay of a previously existing religious unity. This fact created a demand for a new solution. This was met by the American Constitution.

The question here concerns the position of the Catholic conscience in the face of the new American solution to a problem that for centuries has troubled various nations and societies. In the United States the Catholic community faces the task of making itself intellectually aware of the conditions of its own coexistence within the American pluralistic scene. Indicative of the pluralism in the United States today is the fact that there are 258 religious bodies in a total population of about 172,000,000. As of March 1957 there were 78,952,000 Protestants, 34,563,851 Roman Catholics and 5,200,000 Jews in the United States.

The first part of this section will analyze the American proposition with regard to social unity. An effort will be made to formulate a statement of the essential content of the American consensus, whereby we are made "e pluribus unum"--one society subsisting amid multiple pluralism. Simply to make the statement is to show why American Catholics participate with ready conviction in the American consensus. The second part of the analysis of the American proposition will be concerned with the problem of religious pluralism, especially as this proposition is embodied in our fundamental law.

In pursuing the argument, it is taken for granted that the principles of the Catholic faith are apposite. Obviously, religious faith and morals are not subject to judgment by the norms of any political and social system. The question is therefore sometimes raised whether Catholicism is compatible with American democracy. This question is not valid or pertinent, because it inverts the order of values. The question is whether American democracy is compatible with Catholicism.

And this leads us to the necessity of discussing the question of the "American proposition." This means the whole organized constellation of principles and ideas, values and sentiments, techniques and institutions in terms of which the American people interpret to themselves their society, their state, their government, their political and social ideals and the method of their achievement.

First of all, the Declaration of Independence made clear what the American proposition is through use of the phrase "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." Translated into other terms this means "There are truths and we hold them." Thus, the American proposition rests on the traditional conviction that there are truths and that they can be known.

The first truth to which the American proposition appeals is likewise stated in that landmark of Western political theory--

the Declaration of Independence. In affirming the sovereignty of God over nations as well as over individual man, it imparts to politics a fundamental human meaning. This is undoubtedly one of the best examples of a principle which clearly distinguishes the conservative Christian tradition of America from the Jacobin laicist tradition of Europe. As is well known, the Jacobin tradition proclaimed the autonomous reason of man to be the first and sole principle of political organization. In contrast to this, the first article of the American political faith is that the political community, as a form of free and ordered human life, looks to the sovereignty of God as the first principle of its organization. In the Jacobin tradition, religion is at best a purely private concern, a matter of personal devotion and having no connection with public affairs. This meant that for them society and the State which gives it legal form and the government which is its organ of action are by definition agnostic or atheist, and leaders are immune from any imperative or judgment higher than the will of the people in whom resides ultimate and total sovereignty. This does not mean that the United States has not had agnostics or unbelievers. But it does mean that it has never known organized, militant atheism on the Jacobin doctrinaire scale.

It is relevant to point out that at the time of the Jacobins in Europe, President John Adams stated the first of all American principles in his remarkable proclamation of March 6, 1799. He said: "...it is also most reasonable in itself that men who are capable of social acts and relations, who owe their improvements to the social state and who derive their enjoyments from it, should, as a society, make acknowledgements of dependence and obligation to Him who hath endowed them with these capacities and elevated them in the scale of existence by these distinctions...."

Later, this same principle was to be echoed by President Lincoln in another proclamation on May 30, 1863 when he stated: "Whereas the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and nations, has by resolution requested the President to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation; and whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men to owe their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and trespasses in humble sorrow, yet with the assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon..."

This same principle was restated by President Eisenhower in a proclamation of similar intent in June 1952. However, it must not be overlooked that some American secularists have uttered dissent from this principle. But the secularist dissent

is clearly a dissent and serves to illustrate the existence of the American affirmation. The dissent is continually challenged. For instance, as late as 1952 an opinion of the United States Supreme Court, the highest judicial tribunal in the country, challenged the secularist dissent by asserting..."We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being." Three times before--in 1815, 1892 and 1931--the Court has formally espoused this principle.

It would also be well for us to examine one more characteristic of the American proposition as implying a consensus. This is the Bill of Rights. It is hardly necessary to point out that the philosophy of the American Bill of Rights was also tributary to the tradition of natural law, namely to the idea that man has certain original responsibilities that are above his status as a citizen.

These responsibilities create inherent rights that are beyond any act of government. They cannot be granted by government and they cannot be surrendered to government. These rights are inalienable, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, since their ultimate source is in God.

The power of this doctrine, which inspired both the Revolution and the Republic, resides in the fact that it drew a line of demarcation around the exercise of political or social authority. Should the government seek to venture across this line, it enters forbidden territory and becomes "unconstitutional."

With this as a background let us now compare some of the Continental and American concepts of Church and State as expounded by Father John Courtney Murray, a noted American theologian.

Murray makes a distinction between the two forms. One assumed a most self-conscious and organized form in the modern religion of laicism. Religion was the religion of self-salvation wherein man becomes God and society becomes the Church. Murray states that it is customary to speak of the secularization of politics as a specific modern phenomenon. However, he feels a more revealing term would be the sacrilization of politics, meaning the elevation of the society-state to the level of a quasi-religious form of life. Continental separation of Church and State, as Pope Leo XIII understood, was an essential aspect of this movement.

Murray also points out that the American political tradition, whose parentage was English rather than Continental, has remained substantially untouched by the two radical vices which affected

the Continental heritage--absolutism and sacralization of politics. He refers to the political form of American government and not to the mores of American society. In the United States the separation of Church and State belongs to the "political form of the public powers" and not to the "legislation," to use the distinction made by Leo XIII in his encyclical, Au Milieu, in urging French Catholics to accept in principle the political form of the Third Republic and to concern themselves with altering its legislation. American separation is linked indissolubly to the notion of government of limited powers--namely, powers limited by popular consent.

The link of continuity with the great tradition has indeed been weakened, although in America its results have never been as radical as on the Continent.

It is necessary to stress the firmness with which the Constitution of the United States asserts the distinction between society and State and the principle of a government of limited powers. The omnipotent society-state has been repudiated. The consequence is that the State remains interior to society and not outside it. The state stands in the service of society and is subordinate to its purposes. Society possesses primacy over the State. And in this sense, the spiritual is located in society and not in the State and thus the principle of the primacy of the spiritual holds sway over the political.

Within this structure of politics the American concept of separation of Church and State finds its place. It is a consequence of the distinction between society and State. It is a consequence of the fact that society, the people, has only granted the government limited powers. It is a consequence of the general theory of pluralism of powers whereby society is directed.

Orestes Brownson, a reputable critic of American Catholicism in the nineteenth century, asserted that although the American Constitution recognizes its incompetence in the spiritual, this does not mean that it is un-religious or even anti-religious in character.

He remarked: "The American state is not an infidel or godless State, nor is it indifferent to religion. It does not indeed, as the State, profess any particular form of Christianity, but it recognizes the importance and necessity of religion and its obligation to respect and protect the religion of its citizens. It does not assume that it has the right to ignore their religion and pursue a policy of its own, regardless of its effect on the form of religion they profess."

Brownson was not maintaining that the mores of the American people were blameless from the viewpoint of Christian morals. In fact, he was a very severe critic of his fellow Americans. But he was emphatic in asserting that as far as the fundamental constitution of the nation was concerned, there exists complete harmony with Catholic doctrine.

Furthermore, the American separation of Church and State neither implies nor affects any sacrilization of politics. The First Amendment of the Constitution states that "The Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." It has no religious overtones at all and its purpose is not to separate religion from society, but only from the order of the law. It implies no denial of the sovereignty of God over society and the State, no negation of the social necessity and value of religion and no assertion that the affairs of society and the State are to be conducted in disregard of the natural or divine law, or even of ecclesiastical law. In fact, the American concept represents a repudiation of the sacrilization of the political order and insists on its secular status.

But to avoid any misunderstanding, it should be stressed that the American Catholic refuses to make an ideological idol out of the religious freedom and separation of Church and State, as provided for in the Constitution, when he refuses to "believe" therein as an article of faith.

He takes the highest ground available in this matter of relations between religion and government when he asserts that his commitment to the religious clauses of the Constitution is a moral commitment to them as articles of peace in a pluralistic society.

The views of Pope Leo XIII, as expressed in his Encyclical Humanum Genus in 1884, are pertinent to this problem. In mentioning the juridical equality of religions in the fact of positive human law, he is careful to show its relations to a more radical theory. There is the principle that the new society-state has its own secular religion which provides it with its foundations apart from any appeal to the Christian religion. There is also the novum ius, the new concept of indivisible state sovereignty--a prolongation of royal and confessional absolutism--empowering government to reduce all traditional religions to the common level of private cults, which are of concern only to the individuals who comprise them.

These equal cults, insofar as they are socially organized, all share the formally appointed legal status of voluntary organizations. They owe their legal existence within the society-state to the ius commune. They equally share the privileges authoritatively granted by the ius commune.

Now, the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, providing that there will be no established Church is not by any means the same kind of juridical provision as the Continental ius commune. The difference results from the fundamental divergence of the political theories that are respectively the premises of each. The Continental ius commune in the "separate society-states was predicated on the laicist prolongation of the older absolutism and regalism. Its supposition was that a power was inherent in the sovereignty of the State which empowered it to formulate a statute whereby the legal status of the Church would be determined and then to impose this statute on the Church.

In contrast to this, the supposition of the First Amendment is that no such power is inherent in the political sovereignty of the State. Furthermore, the sovereignty has no such power because it was not included in the grant of power made to the government by the common consent of the people. The American Government is, by the act of the people which formed it, a government of limited powers.

The difference then is that the Continental "separate" society-state is presumed to have all power in the field of religion. The American Republic declares itself to have no power in that field. The Continental ius commune supposed that the political sovereignty, as the source of all rights, is likewise the source of whatever rights religion of the Church might have. The First Amendment supposes that the rights of religion and the Church are primary and original. They are not granted by the State and neither may they be limited by the State.

But in the field of Church-State relations it is true to say that the Catholic Church in the United States has had no history. It has been obliged to forge a history, just as the American Republic itself began a history. In a true sense, there never was a separation of the Catholic Church from the State in America, because there never has been a historical union of the Church with the State. For this reason the term "separation" cannot have the same meaning in the United States as in Europe, namely, a rupture with the past.

Now, with regard to the historical attachment of Catholics to democracy and the State, the observations of Alexis de Tocqueville in his work De La Democratie en Amerique, are timely.

Although a century has passed since its publication, nothing has been published since that destroys its validity.

He stated that Catholics constituted the most republican and most democratic class in the United States. He pointed out that the Catholic religion had erroneously been regarded as the natural enemy of democracy. To him, Catholicism seemed to be one of the most favorable elements calling for equality of condition among men. In the Catholic Church, de Tocqueville stated, the religious community is composed of only two elements--the priest and the people. The priest alone rises above the rank and file of his flock and all below him are equal.

It is hardly necessary to point out that Catholicism has always had some part in the history of the United States. Charles Carroll of Carrollton was a staunch Catholic and signed the Declaration of Independence. His brother, John Carroll, a Jesuit priest, who later became the first Archbishop in the United States, did not hesitate to go to Canada to persuade the Canadians to join the Americans in their military efforts to render the Declaration of Independence effective.

Captain John Barry, with hundreds of American Catholics, took up arms and participated in the American Revolution and there were Catholics among the men who shaped the Constitution of the new nation. From that time on, Catholics lived in America, proud of their citizenship and eager to swear loyal defense of the Constitution when they were called to public office or military service.

It is quite true to say that Catholics in the United States have never felt any conflict in conscience between their democratic allegiance and their Catholic commitments. Yet, despite this fact, even in the early period of the United States, the nineteenth century and today, there are many non-Catholics who are not willing to accept this fact. In the early period of US history, Catholicism was regarded by some as alien and a threat to the American institutions. At the time of the first census in 1790, less than one per cent of the population was Roman Catholic--30,000 out of 3,900,000. Restrictive legislation in some of the colonies accounted in part for this situation.

However, Catholic immigration increased greatly after 1830 and tremendously after 1840 and this had a pronounced effect upon the attitude towards Catholics. The chief influx was from Ireland and nearly all of them were Catholics. Most of

them remained in the eastern cities. There was also heavy Catholic immigration from Germany. By 1840 there was an estimated 663,000 out of a total population of 14,195,000 white Americans.

The ensuing tensions stemmed from several sources. Anti-alien, specifically anti-Irish, feeling, the fear of anti-republican influences and the belief that Catholicism was hostile to the fundamental principles of America, were among them.

Furthermore, the increase alarmed many American Protestants who disliked the Church and feared that native-born Americans would have their jobs taken away from them by the cheap labor from Ireland and Germany. The result was an organized effort against Catholics under the banner of American nativism.

The anti-Catholic thesis of this nativism was based on these alleged grounds:

(1) that the Pope was a foreign ruler to whom all Catholics give prior loyalty and that they received instructions governing their political actions as citizens;

(2) that the Catholic hierarchy, from the Pope down, was hostile to democracy and to civil rights and planned to gain control and transform it; and

(3) that control was sought to direct the masses of Catholic voters at the polls and even perhaps armed insurrection.

Organizations such as the American Protective Associations reflected these prejudices.

In addition, reasons for feeling that Catholicism was hostile to cherished American principles was based on the alleged Vatican alliances with anti-democratic governments and the Pope's denunciation of liberalism.

Contemporary criticism of the Catholic doctrine of Church and State was reflected by Paul Blanshard and an organization known as Protestants And Other Americans United. They contended that the Church was a threat to the American way of life and that its influence should be resisted.

Men like Blanshard do not deny that American Catholics are loyal to American democracy. Nor do they deny that American Catholics do not believe that there is an opposition between

their Catholic commitments and their obligations as Americans. What they deny is that this position is logical in the light of authoritative Catholic doctrine on Church and State relationships. These critics scrutinize the various Catholic expositions of Catholic teaching on this point and reach the conclusion that Americanism and Catholicism are irreconcilable.

These critics take examples from events in Italy and Spain, where the Church enjoys a favored position, to show what would happen were the Catholics to become a majority in the United States. But they fail to examine the cases of Ireland and Portugal--two predominantly Catholic countries--where there is no union of Church and State.

Various circumstances have stimulated American Catholic theologians to re-examine the position on the relations between Church and State and they have been aided by Catholic thinkers from other lands such as Luigi Sturzo, Jacques Maritain and Heinrich Rommen.

I shall deal with only one exposition of the problem. That is Father John Courtney Murray's synthesis of the principles directing the Church's relations to the State.

The principles may be found in Gelasius, Boniface VII, Pius IX, Leo XIII and Pius XII. There are three of them:

(1) the Church, because it is a supernatural spiritual society and because the spiritual has primacy in human life, is superior to the State and therefore must remain free from its jurisdiction;

(2) the commonwealth arises from the nature of men in order that man may satisfy his needs and potentialities. Its arrangements must be dictated by the truth, applied to and tempered by, a concrete situation so that it can effectively promote the common good in terms of the peace and prosperity of the citizen-body; and

(3) since the same human person belongs to the two distinct societies which are for his peace and not for his confusion, the Church and State must collaborate in harmony and concord which are to be achieved according to the respective structures of both.

As we have already noted, in the American-type democracy, governmental institutions have no power to act in religious matters, not because they were hostile to religion, but because the framers of these institutions were anxious to give it the fullest freedom in a religiously pluralistic society.

For this reason, the type of concordat so frequently found in history, is not possible in the case of the United States, since this would presuppose that the government dealing with the Holy See was empowered to do so.

In the United States, the status of the Catholic as a citizen has been described as a "fractional citizen-king." Through the democratic processes he can influence and direct legislation. He makes his voice heard so that the commonwealth will not impose on him obligations not in harmony with his duties as a Catholic. As Pope Leo XIII gladly conceded, this has worked remarkably well in the United States.

In any case, the net result of the current controversy concerning the relations of Church and State has been a clarification of doctrine, although there was no feeling that a conflict existed. To the contrary, there is hearty agreement that on the issue fundamental to American Catholics--there is no conflict between loyalties to God and country. Although the method of thinking will not answer the Blanshardians, and is not intended to, the clarification was mainly designed to go into the problem that Blanshard exploited. It must be recognized that Blanshard understands American democracy as a naturalistic arrangement of social relations where truth has no determining role in communal life and legislation. For truth he substitutes popular consent achieved through free debate.

Although pure pragmatism cannot be made the philosophy of law, it is nonetheless true that the value of any law is mainly pragmatic. The First Amendment surely passes this test of good law. One might call it the American experience in the sense that it has been central in American history and also unique in the history of the world.

In any event, the experience has three interrelated facets. First, America has proved by experience that political unity and stability are possible without uniformity or religious belief and practice, without the necessity of any governmental restrictions on any religion. For a century and a half, the United States has displayed to the world the fact that political unity and stability are not inherently dependent on the common sharing of one religious faith. If, therefore, such a dependence elsewhere exists, it must be explained not in terms of inherent necessity, but in terms of particular circumstances.

The second American experience was that stable political unity, which means agreement on the common good of man at the

level of performance, is positively strengthened by the exclusion of religious differences from the area of concern allotted to government. In America, we have been rescued from the disaster of ideological parties. Even the American Civil War does not refute this view; it was not an ideological conflict, but simply a war between the states, a conflict of interests.

The third and most striking aspect of the American experience consists in the fact that religion itself, not the least the Catholic Church, has benefited by the free institutions, by the maintenance, even in exaggerated form, of the distinction between Church and State.

In October 1947, Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston spoke of the benefits of American institutions on Catholic loyalty. He said: "Well, first let it be said that Catholics are also among the American people. Catholics, we have already said, have gained as much from the American system as have their neighbors and have given to the defense of that system the full share of brain and brawn and blood. Catholics grow weary of efforts to resurrect from the limbo of defunct controversies the alleged danger from the Catholic side of union of Church and State in America."

Let us sum up some significant points. The unique relationship between religion, State and society is perhaps the most fundamental feature of American religious and political life. It is not only central to any understanding of American institutions, but also constitutes the sharpest difference between American and European institutions, concepts and traditions.

Paradoxically, the United States has developed a truly secular state, yet at the same time, it is considered to be the only country in the West in which society is conceived as being basically a religious society.

More than a century ago de Tocqueville wrote: "There is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America. Religion is the foremost of the institutions of the country."

This statement seems largely valid, even today. Organized religion plays a part in American society that is seemingly unknown elsewhere. Membership in a church, except in the largest cities, is taken for granted. Social life and community activities center, in many instances, around the churches. Of course, these are outward and superficial observances and are perfectly

compatible with a completely irreligious life. But at least these outward signs indicate a positive emphasis on the part of American society on religion and on active participation of the church in the life of the community.

Furthermore, the United States does not have a Christian trade union federation, as is common on the Continent because such a concept is alien to the US tradition of political action and spiritual life. Yet it is quite wrong to conclude that the labor movement in the United States is "non-religious" like that of Great Britain, perhaps. To the contrary, this totally non-denominational labor movement may well be much closer to organized religion than the typical European "Christian" union. For example, there exists the closest and most intimate bond between the Catholic Church and some locals of the United Automobile Workers or the United Steel Workers, between the Protestant Churches and some locals of the Rubber Workers, or between Jewish Congregations and Garment Workers' locals in New York. Several of the presidents of the leading unions in the United States are practicing religious men.

The dual relationship--the strictest separation of Church and State and the closest interpenetration of religion and society--has been characteristic of the United States from the start of its independence. Even today, the Senate of the United States has a chaplain who opens sessions with a prayer. Also, in the Presidential inaugural ceremony, the President of the United States places his hand on an open Bible in taking the oath of office.

But even more important than the co-existence of a secular state and a religious society is the relationship in which the two are placed in the American creed. The secular state and religious society have not and cannot be conceived as contradictory. No, they are necessarily complementary one to the other. Once again I would like to quote de Tocqueville when he remarked, "I am certain that the Americans hold religion to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions."

It is basic to the American creed that a society can only be religious if religion and the State are radically separated and that the State can only be free if society is basically a religious society.

This belief, however confused in its formulation, underlies all American approaches to the political and social treatment of religion and to the social and individual value of religion. By its very nature, the sphere of the State has to be an autonomous sphere entirely separated from the "natural reason." But also, by definition, a free society is only possible if based on the religious individual.

This leads us to the basic American concept that the State must neither support nor favor any one religious denomination. To do that would be "establishment," if not "prohibition of the free exercise of religion," and strictly forbidden by the First Amendment to the Constitution. But, at the same time, the State must always sponsor, protect and favor religious life in general. The United States is indeed a "secular" state as far as any one denomination is concerned. But, at the same time it is a "religious" commonwealth with regard to its general belief in the necessity of a truly religious basis of citizenship.

The fundamental difference between the European concept of the "secular" state, which is a concept profoundly hostile to religion, and the American concept of the "secular" State resides in a difference of origins.

As you know the European concept is purely a political one. In the American creed, however, the origin of secularism is not political, but religious. Its parents were not politicians, but two great religious thinkers, Roger Williams and Jonathan Edwards. The American concept is grounded in the firm belief in the incomparable value of the religious life. The separation of State and Church is thus in the American creed primarily a need of religion itself.

What I have said may well suffice to show the grounds on which Catholics participate in the American consensus. It has been a providential blessing that the American Republic never put to the Catholic conscience the questions raised by the French Third Republic. There has never been a schism within the American Catholic community as there has been here in France over the right attitude to adopt toward the established polity. There has never been the need to proclaim a policy of Ralliement. In America, the ralliement has been original, spontaneous and universal. Its motive was the evident coincidence of the principles which inspired the American Republic with the principles that are structural to the Western Christian political tradition.

As a result of consistent Catholic support of American institutions the charges of "alien" or "foreign" have largely been forgotten and acceptance has been a corollary. This is shown by the results of the November 1958 elections. Out of a total of 98 Senators there are 12 Catholics, while in the House of Representatives there are 91 Catholic Congressmen out of a total of 436. One Supreme Court Justice is a Catholic.

Finally, the noted British historian, Christopher Dawson, recently said that the Catholic Church in America has created a "new image" to the Church Universal particularly by its unparalleled educational system and the most highly organized charity throughout the world. All this has taken place in America, as representative of a pluralist society, wherein religious faith is--as it must be--free and wherein the government undertakes to represent the principle of freedom.